

GRAMMARWACKY

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"I feel badly," said Alice as she sat down at the tea table. She explained to the sleepy Dormouse that after falling down the rabbit hole she had landed on her hands -- now all of her fingers were quite numb.

The Dormouse yawned sympathetically and studied Alice. Always thinking first of his own welfare, he considered it fortunate, indeed, that the young girl was not nauseous.

He changed the subject: "Hopefully, the March Hare will arrive soon."

No sooner had he spoken than the March Hare did appear and, as predicted, seemed to be anticipating the tea party with great expectation.

Suddenly the trumpets sounded. "The Queen! The Queen!" someone announced and the Queen of Hearts marched into the garden.

Her majesty glared at Alice, the Dormouse, the Mad Hatter and the March Hare who sat together at one end of the long table. "Everyone must watch their manners," she instructed her entourage, pointing a finger at the foursome. "They do, indeed, look ill-mannered!"

Alice was annoyed. "What's between you and I?" she asked. The Queen, however, did not hear her question. So the March Hare leaned across the table and whispered the answer into Alice's ear: "J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S and T."

The Hatter opened his eyes wide, but all he said was, "That reminds me of a riddle: How can one use correctly the phrase 'It is me'?"

"Come, we shall have such fun now," thought Alice. "I'm glad they've begun asking riddles."

"I believe I can guess the answer to that," she added aloud. "The answer is 'What two-letter word begins with M and ends with E'."

The Hatter nodded and closed his eyes.

Another blare of the trumpets. "The Knave of Hearts is going to lay down on the grass!" shouted the Queen. "That's curious," thought Alice. "Why would anyone want to cover this lovely lawn with feathers?"

By this time the King of Hearts had taken a seat at his wife's side and was telling jokes to the gardeners. "He's literally a card," the March Hare noted.

It was time for everyone to move to another place at the tea table. Alice was happy to acquire another set of silverware. How ever else could she get two teaspoonsful of sugar for her tea?

"I don't want no tea," exclaimed the Dormouse. Alice obliged politely and passed the teapot to him.

The party had begun to get boring so Alice, the Dormouse, the Mad Hatter and the March Hare got up and walked away.

FUTURE MEETINGS

On October 10, 1981 (10 AM - 5 PM) Waubonsee Community College in Sugar Grove, Illinois will sponsor the Second Annual North Central Names Institute. Anyone interested in presenting a paper or leading a panel discussion should get in touch with Professor Laurence E. Seits of Waubonsee by July 1, 1981. Papers are limited to 20 minutes; general topics are place names, geographical names, toponymics; literary onomastics; personal names; local Illinois names in various aspects; miscellaneous names (railroad names, Indian names, brand or commercial names, etc.). Free copies of the "Papers of the North Central Names Institute, 1980" are available from Professor Seits while the supply lasts (articles by Word Ways authors L.R.N. Ashley and George H. Scheetz, among others).

WHIM (Western Humor and Irony Membership) plans a conference on linguistic humor at Arizona State University on April 1, 1982. At this time, papers of 10 to 20 minutes in length are being considered from a wide variety of fields: linguistics, medicine, names, nursing, psychology, reading, science, body language, composition, drama, education, foreign languages, history and literature. Proposals for talks should be sent by July 4, 1981 to Professor Don L. F. Nilsen, English Department, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona 85281; the theme of the conference will be The Language of Humor and the Humor of Language.